

BELVIDERE TERRACE  
1000 block North Calvert Street, including 107 East Chase & 114  
East Eager Streets  
Baltimore  
Independent City  
Maryland

HABS MD-1177  
*MD-1177*

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### BELVIDERE TERRACE

HABS No. MD-1177

**LOCATION:** 1000 block of N. Calvert Street, including the corner units with the house numbers 107 E. Chase Street and 114 E. Eager Street, Baltimore, Baltimore County, Maryland.<sup>1</sup>

**SIGNIFICANCE:**

Despite the block being principally designed by two different architectural firms, a majority of the houses in 1000 block of Calvert Street possess an overall cohesiveness in scale, material, and architectural ornament that is rarely seen in Baltimore's Mount Vernon district. Some of the units were described in contemporary newspapers as the first instances of "Queen Anne" architecture in Baltimore, and as an ensemble their highly active facades and intricate detailing clearly reference high-Victorian aesthetic sensibilities. This referencing dramatically departed from the more subdued and planar local vernacular used in conceiving the bulk of Baltimore's nineteenth-century urban dwellings. Their ample size, desirable neighborhood location, and opulent outward appearance indicate that the houses of the 1000 block of Calvert Street were envisioned for occupation by well-off Baltimoreans. Although most of the houses are among the lesser-known projects of two prolific architectural partnerships, they are important extant residential works by Wilson & Wilson and Wyatt & Sperry.<sup>2</sup>

**HISTORIAN:** James A. Jacobs.

**DESCRIPTION:**

The 1000 block of Calvert Street is among the most lively in the Mount Vernon area of Baltimore, if not in the city as a whole. Most of the houses lining this block are exceptional examples of high-Victorian eclecticism. They convey more an aesthetic of parts than one where the components are subjugated to an overall design schema, particularly the twenty-

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<sup>1</sup>Although thirty-seven of the forty-three units lining the 1000 block of Calvert Street were definitely part of either the 1880 Wilson & Wilson commission for the east side (15) or the 1881 Wyatt & Sperry design on the west side (22), as a whole the block's present structures date from no fewer than six building campaigns. The term "Belvidere Terrace" was broadly associated with this block no later than 1890, when it was printed on a Sanborn fire insurance map. Assuming that the terra cotta plaque bearing the name and year "A.D. 1880" on the third floor of No. 1037 was not a later change, "Belvidere Terrace" was attached to the block as a place-name at the time of its initial subdivision and development. While the name might not have applied to every house in the block, present use of "Belvidere Terrace" refers to the 1000 block as a whole. See Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Maps for Baltimore, Maryland*, vol. 2 (New York, 1890), plate 67.

<sup>2</sup>For additional information related to row houses and urban townhouses in Baltimore see the reports for the Decatur Miller House, HABS No. MD-1175; 18-28 E. Mount Vernon Place, HABS No. MD-1176; the Graham-Hughes House, HABS No. MD-1178; and the Addendum to Residence Row, HABS No. MD-399.

one interior units on the block's west side. Gables of varying profile, corbelled chimneys, finials, and perforated terra cotta decoration along the ridge contribute to an active roofline. Contrasting materials—marble, granite, pressed brick, molded brick, terra cotta, pressed metal window bays, and ornate iron window guards, “balconettes,” and other decorative elements—provide contrast in color, texture, and form. Pilasters, foliated plaques, and patterned stringcourses, gable decoration, and implied cornices and entablatures, create a modeled street face possessing a physical dynamism seen in stark contrast to the often unrelentingly planar quality of most urban residential rows. Multipaned sash fitted singly or in groups, and window openings of varied of shapes and sizes, further contribute to the variety. A liberal use of details drawn from a classical vocabulary—column capitals, rosettes, triglyphs, swags, volutes, triangular and broken scrolled pediments, keystones, and consoles—reference both trends rooted in antiquity and the Renaissance. While presaging the arrival of the Colonial Revival mode of expression in the 1890s, the random use and appliquéd quality of these elements adheres to high-Victorian visual preferences rather than the cleaner lines of later, full-blown examples of the Colonial Revival.

The four center units on the east side (Nos. 1013–1019) are the most unique when considering the facades in that they are slightly taller, faced in stone, and are comparatively subdued overall in character. Of particular interest, the rectilinear bays on the second stories are fitted into a wider openings topped by a segmental arch, with brick infill making up the difference. This arrangement conveys an attempt to age the structure prematurely, by suggesting that the pressed metal bays date from a second, or later, generation of change. On both sides of the block all of the houses' rear elevations were conceived of in a more utilitarian manner. Standard brickwork laid-up in a running bond with window openings defined at the top by segmental arches. On the east side, the back rooms on the first floor were spatially augmented by one-story frame bays cantilevered from the masonry wall. Similarly, on the west side, the rear rooms were also extended with one-story masonry extensions; at the second floor a small extension square in plan was constructed on top of the lower portion, possibly the location of the houses' original water closets.

A majority of the houses on both sides of the street are arranged in plans bearing two principal rooms on each floor, a common arrangement in Baltimore throughout the nineteenth century. Of the houses with this arrangement, most have a stairhall at center between the rooms, connected to the front door by a passage that reduces the width of the front room. While likely relying mostly on artificial illumination, this internal space—bounded by interior and party walls—receives diffused natural light that filters downward in the stairwell from a skylight four stories above. Nos. 1013–1019 vary slightly in that they have centered front doors opening onto a large entry hall that includes the principal stairs, which are located at the space's rear adjacent to the back room; the upper stories have similar plans to the others in the block with two rooms separated by the landing and stairs up to the next level. On the west side, No. 1012 (now altered) and No. 1032 bore centered front doors, and are likely arranged in a manner similar to the four center units on the east side. Units with known differences in plan include: No. 1035 on the east side, which bearing a double lot and lateral fenestration, allows for a three-room-deep plan plus stairwell, and

107 Chase Street, on the northern corner of the west side and 114 Eager Street on the southern corner of the west side. These corner units also have three-room-deep plans, but as they each have one exposed lateral wall, the principal entrance is located on the long walls, into what is the stairhall in other units.

Like most other nineteenth-century urban residential districts, mid-twentieth-century decline precipitated a great deal of change—some of it drastic—as large single-family residences were turned into offices or cut into apartments. In recent years, a reinterest in urban living has found some of the units returned to a single-family state.

## HISTORY:

In December 1874 *Appletons' Journal*, a popular periodical published in New York and subtitled, "A Magazine of General Literature," featured an article focusing on "an old Baltimore mansion" named "Belvedere."<sup>3</sup> Belvedere, or more correctly "Belvidere," stood as a final remainder of the vast Howard estate that once covered a large swath of Baltimore north of the harbor and business districts.<sup>4</sup> Between 1786 and 1794 Colonel John Eager Howard constructed a spacious two-story brick house arranged in five bays topped by a hip roof. Extensive formal gardens and bucolic woodlands surrounded this house and its dependencies. At Belvidere, John Eager Howard and his family lived and entertained comfortably for over three decades. At the time of his 1827 death, he had already given land at the estate's southern portion for the erection of the city's Washington Monument (Robert Mills, 1815–1829).<sup>5</sup> Using the monument as a centerpiece, Howard's heirs laid-out the four parks extending from the monument on a Greek cross plan. By the 1850s the lots facing these parks, Mount Vernon and Washington places, and those on nearby streets became the most sought after residential property in the city. By the 1870s, few pieces of the former Howard estate remained that were not carved up into blocks as the city grid rapidly expanded. In 1874, *Appletons' Journal* described the manner in which Baltimore crept northward across the woodlands and lawns of the estate:

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<sup>3</sup>"An Old Baltimore Mansion," *Appletons' Journal* 8:301 (Dec. 26, 1874): 801–803. Copy located in "Historic Houses, Baltimore, Belvidere," vertical files, Maryland Department, Central Library, Enoch Pratt Free Library (Pratt), Baltimore, Maryland.

<sup>4</sup>The historical (eighteenth-century) spelling of "Belvidere" with an "I" was confirmed by the Maryland Historical Society in 1947 after research conducted upon receiving an oil painting of the Howard dwelling painted ca. 1858 by Augustus Weidenbach. William Hoyt, who researched the matter, commented in regard to the later change to an "E" that: "somebody along the line thought the E-spelling was more Italian, I guess." See "It Is Spelled Belvidere, Historical Society Says," *Baltimore Sun* 26 May 1947, clipping located in "Historic Houses, Belvidere, Baltimore City," vertical files, Pratt. While the 1874 *Appleton's Journal* article used an "E," the 1890 Sanborn fire insurance map still employed the "I" spelling in reference to houses in the 1000 block of Calvert Street. Confusion about the spelling compounded with the construction of the Hotel *Belvedere*. When the project was announced in 1902, the "I" spelling was used; however, a later hotel vice president commented in regarding to changing the spelling to an "E." "all members of the board of directors favored Belvedere because it is appropriate and euphonious." See "It Is Spelled Belvidere." Except when in direct quotations, for this report both the Howard family house and the later name associated with the 1000 block of Calvert Street will be spelled with an "I".

<sup>5</sup>For more information about the Baltimore Washington Monument, see HABS No. MD-71.

And the town grew to be a city, and deflected to the right and left of Belvedere, and crept around it, and leaped over it, far into the country; and still the house stood as it stands to-day, but gradually shorn of the wealth of its surrounding forests and of much of its wide, sloping lawn.<sup>6</sup>

Although the estate house still remained at the top of the block, its fate had already been decided as it stood directly in the path of the planned block of Calvert Street between Eager and Howard streets. Said *Appletons' Journal*, "the dwelling is situated on an eminence rising directly in what will some day be the bed of Calvert Street."<sup>7</sup> By 1874, the house had passed into the hands of the McKim family, who made their fortune in copper.<sup>8</sup> Patriarch John S. McKim purchased the house in 1841 and upon his 1865 death it was left to his wife Catherine Lilburne Harrison McKim.<sup>9</sup> A bird's eye view of Baltimore in 1869 depicts Belvidere at the center of a thick grove of trees at the edge of the built-up portions of the city.<sup>10</sup> Calvert Street was opened and lined with houses as far north as Eager Street, passing along the southern border of the final remnants of "Howard's Park." In February 1875, Catherine L. McKim and her children turned over property forming the "bed" of the 1000 and 1100 blocks of Calvert Street to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for one dollar, per an 1828 condemnation of land.<sup>11</sup> The deed stipulated that within two years the city government was responsible for opening Calvert in these blocks, an act that included grading, paving, and granite curbing. A contemporary article described grading activities in the block:

McKim's Hill, at the head of Calvert Street, which has been gradually disappearing before the march of improvement, is being cut through from Eager Street for the purpose of opening Calvert Street to Chase Street, the northern boundary of the hill. A force of laborers have [*sic*] been engaged upon the work for some time, and considerable progress has been made. The excavation will be 34 feet at its highest point, and 4,500 cubic yards of earth will be excavated. The street bed through the property was ceded to the city by Mrs. McKim...The street line passes directly through the old mansion which stands on the hill.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>"An Old Baltimore Mansion," 801.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>"John S. McKim," Deilman Hayward Files, Maryland Historical Society (MHS), Baltimore, Maryland.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, for wife and death date; "It Is Spelled Belvidere," for purchase date.

<sup>10</sup>E. Sachse & Co., *Bird's Eye View of the City of Baltimore, 1869* (Baltimore, 1870).

<sup>11</sup>Deed, Baltimore City Land Records (hereafter BCLR), G. R. 690, folio 416; Helen Henry, "Belvedere Terrace," *Sun Magazine* 14 Dec. 1875: 35, for reference to 1828 condemnation. This article on Belvidere Terrace focuses on a house that was not part of the major developments on the east and west sides of the block. It is suggested in the article that 1031 and 1033 N. Calvert Street were designed by J. Appleton Wilson ca. 1886. The two houses at these numbers were designed as a pair, and differ considerably from the others in the block. They do not, for example, possess the ebullient detail that the substantiated houses by Wilson & Wilson and Wyatt & Sperry display. It is not known whether these houses were also designed by J. Appleton Wilson or that the attribution was merely an extension of information known about other structures in the block.

<sup>12</sup>"Another Old Landmark About to Be Destroyed: The Howard Estate," ca. 1874-1875, typescript in "Historic Houses, Baltimore, Belvidere," vertical files, Pratt.

While apparently still existing when grading began, on 1 May 1875 the city passed a paving order suggesting that the eighteenth-century dwelling had already been removed.<sup>13</sup> Certainly the McKim's, who made money from subdividing the block into residential lots, did not long mourn the house's loss, nor did the writer of the above passage who saw the expansion of the city over "Howard's Park" as "the march of improvement." While there may truly have been an apparent lack of sentiment about the transformation of by then historic landscapes into denser new residential districts, not all Baltimoreans were so enthused with all of the change. In an August 1883 journal entry, architect J. Appleton Wilson, who ironically, only a few years earlier designed Catherine McKim's new house and fifteen others on the east side of the 1000 block of Calvert Street, mused:

Arthurs [*sic*] house is now being torn down & an alley, running from Edmondson Ave. to Harlem Ave. being cut through it. Now I suppose it will soon be leveled with the surrounding streets & nothing remain[ing] of the old place, where we have spent so many happy hours. Except the names of the streets to remind us of what once has been.<sup>14</sup>

Beyond his involvement in the development of the block formerly containing Belvidere, Wilson's comments about names being the only remainder of old Baltimore also related closely to the 1000 block of Calvert Street as it was bounded by "Eager" Street to the south and contained "Belvidere" Terrace.

With the block cleared and graded, and Calvert Street paved, development of the block could proceed unabated. While the two-year period of 1880-1881 saw the 1000 block almost completely filled with new structures, the prior land transactions and plans were quite convoluted. The remnants of the estate were owned jointly—though with varied interests—by Catherine McKim, her son Randolph and his wife Agnes, another son Telfair, and two daughters, Mary and Margaret.<sup>15</sup> In the mid-1870s they used the property as collateral for a number of loans; however, by 1879 it was clear that they were preparing to subdivide and sell parcels on both sides of the 1000 block of Calvert for residential development purposes.<sup>16</sup> In August 1879, Catherine and her children sold four parcels of land to I. Parker Veazey for \$150,000, two of which were the property bordering Calvert Street between Eager and Chase streets.<sup>17</sup> While Veazey's exact relationship to the McKims is not wholly known, he was intimately involved in the labyrinthine sales transactions among and between family members during the period 1879-1881. In cases where land or lots were finally sold outside of the McKim family, I. Parker Veazey was generally the one recorded as selling the property, as the family's agent.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Henry, 35, for paving order.

<sup>14</sup>J. Appleton Wilson Diary, July 4, 1871-June 1, 1885, box 7, Wilson Papers, 1790-1952, MS 833, MHS, Baltimore, Maryland.

<sup>15</sup>Only the deed to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore regarding the bed of Calvert Street included Telfair. See footnote 10.

<sup>16</sup>See Mortgages, BCLR, G. R. 722, folio 74, G. R. 735, folio 196, G. R. 755, folio 428.

<sup>17</sup>Deed, BCLR, F. A. P. 851, folio 4.

<sup>18</sup>That Veazey was the McKim family estate "agent" was confirmed in an announcement of construction on the west side of the 1000 block of Calvert Street. See "New Residence Property," *Baltimore Sun* 29 Jun. 1881: (4).

The McKim family did not envision all of the land located on their former estate to be sold for profit. On 2 October 1879 Veazey sold most of the property along the east side of the 1000 block of Calvert back to the family for \$48,000.<sup>19</sup> Two of these parcels included portions of the double lot (No. 1035) on which Catherine McKim's own house was nearing completion. To design this new residence, she chose well-known local architects J. Appleton Wilson and Wilson T. Wilson. John Appleton Wilson (1851–1927) was born into an established and wealthy Baltimore family and spent his formative years at their thirteen-acre estate—"Oakley"—whose centerpiece was an Italianate villa.<sup>20</sup> He attended Columbian College (now George Washington University) in Washington, DC from 1871 to 1873 and studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1873–1874 before returning to Baltimore and opening his own firm by 1877.<sup>21</sup> An undated article in one of his scrapbooks favorably recorded the inauguration of this firm.

**J. Appleton Wilson, architect, has opened an office at the southwest corner of Charles and Saratoga streets...He is a young man of decided genius and those who wish to employ an architect may promote their own interests by employing him. The new lecture room of the Franklin Square Baptist church indicates how gifted he is in church architecture.**<sup>22</sup>

By the time of Catherine McKim's commission, Wilson had taken on a business partner, his cousin Wilson T. Wilson, whose educational background is not as well known. The architectural firm provided plans and used builder H. C. Smyser for the construction.<sup>23</sup> When considering the final product, in October 1879 the *Baltimorean* described the dwelling as "the pioneer of the so-called 'Queen Anne' in Baltimore."<sup>24</sup> A *Baltimore Sun* article similarly stated that "in style the building may be called 'free classic' or 'Queen Anne,' and, so far, is the only one of the style in Baltimore."<sup>25</sup> In elucidating what was meant by "Queen Anne" the article in the *Baltimorean* noted that "its characteristics are a certain statliness [*sic*] combined with picturesqueness of outline, which is very suitable for city residences."<sup>26</sup> The articles both described the west (principal) facade as composed of press brick and 'moulded [*sic*] peerless' brick with the ornamental panels, sills, gables, and door pediment all of terra

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<sup>19</sup>Deed, BCLR, F. A. P., 851, folio 6.

<sup>20</sup>Charles Duff, "John Appleton Wilson," Historical Research Files, Baltimore Architecture Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. Box 8 of the Wilson Papers, MHS, includes J. Appleton Wilson's course notes from William R. Ware's 1873 course in "Model Specifications" at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

<sup>22</sup>J. Appleton Wilson Scrapbook, "Descriptions of Private Work," box 9, Wilson Papers, MHS. The glowing review of Wilson's ability was likely on account of his family's active involvement in the Baptist church. See Duff, for additional information. In addition to the reference to his work for the Franklin Square Baptist Church, a handwritten title notes that the article appeared in the "Religious Herald Rev." It is not certain whether they are the same publication, but a newspaper called the "Religious Herald" was published in Richmond, Virginia from 1828 onward for Baptists. It is not inconceivable that Baptists in Baltimore subscribed to this publication.

<sup>23</sup>"A Handsome Residence," *Baltimore Sun*, 18 Oct. 1879: (4).

<sup>24</sup>"Another Handsome Improvement," *Baltimorean*, 25 Oct. 1879, scrapbook.

<sup>25</sup>"A Handsome Residence."

<sup>26</sup>"Another Handsome Improvement."

cotta, a “comparatively new material in this city.”<sup>27</sup> Whether this was an especially desirable feature at the time, the brick and terra cotta used in the construction made “the entire front [of have the look] of burnt clay, with the single exception of the salmon colored base of granite.”<sup>28</sup>

On account of a double lot assuring the passage of light and air to interior rooms, Catherine McKim’s new house contained three rooms—parlor, library, and dining room—and a spacious interior stairhall on the principal story.<sup>29</sup> The stairhall was lighted by a stained-glass skylight and bedchambers and bathrooms occupied the upper stories.<sup>30</sup> While the new house was thoroughly up-to-date and included all the modern “conveniences,” similarly to the use of old local names for the streets, there were nods to the disappeared Belvidere, as the new house “contain[ed] many parts of the former edifice [“Belvidere”] incorporated into its walls.”<sup>31</sup>

Catherine McKim was apparently pleased with the house as within a year of its completion she hatched plans for continued development in the newly cut-through 1000 block of Calvert Street, again employing the firm of Wilson & Wilson. On 28 April 1880 Catherine McKim, who had obtained control over most of the east side of Calvert Street from her children, sold two parcels back to I. Parker Veazey.<sup>32</sup> These parcels were sold in anticipation of development and encompassed the fourteen contiguous lots at Nos. 1003 through 1029, as well as lot No. 1037, adjacent to her own house on the north.<sup>33</sup> A notice in the *Baltimore Sun* a month later announced: “Mrs. C. L. McKim is about to begin the erection of fifteen dwelling houses on the east side of Calvert Street.”<sup>34</sup> The fifteen houses referred to were to be built on the recently sold lot nos. 1003–1029 and 1037. Wilson & Wilson used Catherine McKim’s own house as a launching point for eleven of the new houses (Nos. 1003–1011, 1021–1029, and 1037) employing red press and molded brick for the front elevations, detailed with terra cotta and stone from the Cheat River area in West Virginia.<sup>35</sup> A decorative terra cotta plaque between the third-floor windows on No. 1037 includes the name “Belvidere Terrace” and date “A.D.1880.” The four middle units of the row of fourteen (nos. 1013–1019) are distinct from the others having much more subdued detailing and facades are largely composed of white-gray Baltimore county marble. Overall, the fourteen attached houses contain three facade types arranged in a mirrored A-B-C-B-A with

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<sup>27</sup>It is not known exactly what the term “peerless” means in reference to brick. The article notes that the brick was made in Philadelphia. A brick-making business called the “Peerless Brick Company” was operating out of Philadelphia in the last decades of the nineteenth century. “Peerless” might merely refer to molded brick from this company. The terra cotta originated in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. See “A Handsome Residence.”

<sup>28</sup>“Another Handsome Residence.”

<sup>29</sup>J. Appleton Wilson and Wilson T. Wilson, “House for Mrs. C. L. McKim, Baltimore,” *American Architect & Building News* 6:196 (27 Sep. 1879).

<sup>30</sup>Ibid; “Another Handsome Improvement.”

<sup>31</sup>“A Handsome Residence.”

<sup>32</sup>Deed, BCLR, F. A. P. 867, folio 13.

<sup>33</sup>The northernmost lot at No. 1039 Calvert Street (at its intersection with Chase Street) was sold by Catherine and her children to Isaac Freeman Rasin on 13 Jan. 1880. See Deed, BCLR, F. A. P. 858, folio 110.

<sup>34</sup>“Building Improvements,” *Baltimore Sun* 4 Jun. 1880: (4).

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., for stone type.



a unit pattern of 3-2-4-2-3. In contrast to the three full floors plus attic of Catherine McKim's house and the adjacent one to the north, the fourteen attached units contained four full or nearly full stories with the center four having four stories plus an attic. The multiple stories making up the houses may have been necessary because, unlike the McKim house, they were for the most part two-rooms-deep with a top-lit stairhall squeezed in between.

In contrast to the piecemeal construction on the block's east side, development on the west was accomplished in almost entirely one campaign. In three separate transactions on 2 October 1879 with three of the McKim children—Randolph, Mary, and Margaret—Veazey sold back land along the block's west side, as well as parcels in the 1100 block of Calvert, each transaction being valued at \$34,000.<sup>36</sup> Given that the value of the land was equal for each child, it is likely that these transactions were a means of dividing their legacies in a fair manner. Unlike the block's east side, in which the houses were built out to the lot line at the sidewalk, a covenant established 10 February 1880 imposed a setback of eight feet for construction assuring "an easement of light and air" for the block.<sup>37</sup> Ultimately, most of the land along the west side of the 1000 block was sold back to I. Parker Veazey, likely in preparation for real estate transactions beyond the McKim family. On 27 May 1881, however, Veazey leased twenty-two lots on the now-subdivided west side—all but the northernmost one at the corner of Calvert and Chase streets—back to Randolph McKim.<sup>38</sup> Five days later Veazey sold the twenty-one interior lots to four different purchasers whose deeds noted Randolph McKim's previous lease of development rights on the properties. The transaction records show that the 18'-0" lots sold for \$3240 and the five center lots of 20'-0" each sold for \$3000 apiece; it is not apparent why the center 20'-0" lots sold for \$240.00 less than the 18'-0" ones.<sup>39</sup> The individuals who purchased the land owned only the lots, and could collect an annual ground rent from Veazey and the McKims, or later the purchasers of houses built on the lots. This situation shows the manner in which the ground rent system could catalyze construction, the sooner a house was built and sold, the sooner the developer was relieved of paying ground rent to the landowner. Within a month of the property sale, an article in the *Baltimore Sun* announced the planned construction of twenty-two houses on the west side of the 1000 block. Veazey is named in the article as the person responsible for awarding the construction contract (to George A. Blake) and it is not clear why it was necessary to lease the development rights to Randolph McKim, prior to the lots' sale and construction of the houses.

For a reason no longer apparent, Veazey and the McKims passed over Wilson & Wilson for design of the block's west side. Given that the Wilsons had designed the matriarch's new dwelling and conceived of the scheme for additional houses on the block's east side, it is possible that the design and/or construction process was fraught with difficulties. For whatever reason, the west side's conception extended from the office of James Bosley Noel

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<sup>36</sup>Deeds, BCLR, F. A. P., 851, folio 10, folio 11, and folio 13.

<sup>37</sup>Easement and Covenant (Deed), BCLR, F. A. P. 862, folio 209. This transaction also notes that an Elizabeth W. Burnap was a fourth interest in the property on that side of the block. Whether she had become part-owner of the land or only had interest in the actual construction on the property is not known at this time.

<sup>38</sup>Lease, BCLR, F. A. P. 900, folio 23.

<sup>39</sup>Deed, BCLR, F. A. P. 900, folios 31-38.

Wyatt and Joseph Evans Sperry. Wyatt and Sperry's backgrounds and architectural education stood quite distinct from one another. Born into an old and wealthy family, Wyatt received an undergraduate degree from Harvard University in 1870, studied architecture for one year at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1870-1871), and then spent three years in the Atelier Vaudremer of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in France.<sup>40</sup> He returned to Baltimore in 1874 and by 1877 had partnered with Sperry.<sup>41</sup> In contrast to Wyatt's extensive architectural training, the extent of Sperry's formal education is not known. Although he opened an "architectural office" in Baltimore by age sixteen, during the mid-1870s he worked in the office of E. Francis Baldwin where he likely met Wyatt.<sup>42</sup> What Sperry lacked in formal education was apparently made up for with a natural drawing talent. His rendering of the Safe Deposit and Trust Company Building (1875) in Baltimore was included in one of the earliest issues of *American Architect and Building News*.<sup>43</sup> Wyatt and Sperry's partnership lasted a decade and included such extant structures as St. Michael and All Angels Church and the Mercantile Safe Deposit and Trust Company Building.

The June 1881 notice of construction mentioned Wyatt & Sperry as the "architects" for "the erection of twenty-two houses on the west side of Calvert street, between Eager and Chase. Five of the houses in the centre of the block will each have a front of 20 feet, and those on either side 18 feet front."<sup>44</sup> This description of the lot widths corresponds with figures included in the land transactions at the end of May and beginning of June; however, those transactions only account for sixteen eighteen-foot-wide houses, rather than seventeen as indicated by the paper. Given that both the 27 May leasing of the lots back to Randolph McKim included the roughly twenty-two-foot wide unit at the northwest corner of Calvert and Eager streets and the architectural affinity of that house and the interior dwellings to its north, it is most likely that the newspaper description assumed (incorrectly) that the corner unit (No 114 E. Eager Street) was also eighteen-feet wide.

While there is no question that the houses on the west side of the block are of different design, Wyatt & Sperry clearly used some of the features in those by Wilson & Wilson as a launching point. Although further from the lot line than those on the east and raised up on high basement, the overall form (three stories plus an attic with front-facing gables or dormers), materials (molded brick, stone, terra cotta), and details drawn from a classical

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<sup>40</sup>Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, "Wyatt, James Bosley Noel," *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956), 674-675, for atelier; "J. B. N. Wyatt Rites Set for Tomorrow," *Baltimore Sun* 26 Feb. 1926: 3, for duration of study. For a simple biographical sketch and incomplete list of works, see *Who's Who In Architecture*, "Wyatt, J(ames) B(osley) Noel," *American Art Annual* 21 (1924): 484.

<sup>41</sup>Bill Pencek, "James Bosley Noel Wyatt," Historical Research Files, Baltimore Architecture Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland.

<sup>42</sup>Peter E. Kurtze, "Joseph Evans Sperry," Historical Research Files, Baltimore Architecture Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland. Sperry's lack of extensive formal education is evident in his obituaries, merely commenting that he moved to Baltimore in 1868 and there began practicing as an architect. Despite his obscure beginnings, by the time of his death, Sperry was a respected and prolific architect. See "Joseph E. Sperry Dies; Baltimore Architect," *New York Times* 8 Aug. 1930: 17; "Sperry Obsequies To Be Held Today," *Baltimore Sun* 8 Aug. 1930: 3; Obituaries, "Sperry, Joseph Evans," *American Art Annual* 27 (1930), 419; Withey and Withey, "Sperry, Joseph Evans," 565.

<sup>43</sup>Pencek, "James Bosley Noel Wyatt."

<sup>44</sup>"New Residence Property."

vocabulary (pilasters, swags, and pediments) clearly reference the earlier work. Even the use of stone for the first-floor of each of the five middle units might reference the four marble clad center units of the east side. Despite the similarities, it is interesting that whereas Catherine McKim's house by the Wilsons was referred to as "Queen Anne" in the *Baltimore Sun* two years prior, the newspaper did not use a similar term in regard to Wyatt & Sperry's scheme. Rather, they were described as "three stories high, with handsomely designed French roofs. The houses are not to be ordinary press brick fronts, but are to be new and novel in construction, artistic in design and ornate in style."<sup>45</sup> Although questionably "new and novel" when considering the essentially conventional plan and construction, use of the modifiers "artistic" and "ornate" certainly applies to both the Wilson & Wilson and the Wyatt & Sperry houses in the 1000 block.

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ADDENDUM TO:  
BELVIDERE TERRACE  
1000 block North Calvert Street, including 107 East Chase & 114 East  
Eager Streets  
Baltimore  
Independent City  
Maryland

HABS MD-1177  
*HABS MD-1177*

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